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JOHN BYROM

says 'Thanks' to his friends

I AM not usually an emotional person but this is an occasion when I must say a lump has come into my throat.

When I was playing for Rovers and Bolton nothing bothered me. I used to go out and play football then go home and forget about everything that happened.

But now as I am writing these words, memories come flooding back . . . my debut for Rovers when I was 17 . . . the hat-tricks I scored against West Ham . . . my transfer to Bolton . . . relegation, then promotion . . . and my last game.

I look back and realise how lucky I have been in having a career spanning 15 years during which I made so many friends in and out of the game.

I enjoyed the relationship I made with fans up and down the country; I enjoyed being something of a character in the game.

I think back to something over 500 League and Cup games for two clubs with great traditions, scoring over 200 goals and I realise how fortunate that I, Lancashire born and bred, should spend all my career in the county I love.

In all my time in football the only serious injury I suffered was when I dropped a brick on my big toe which needed 12 stitches. Right in the middle of Bolton's promotion race!

I have met famous people; I have travelled to places most people only dream about. And I am so grateful for that.

Now it's all over; age has caught up with me — in a footballing sense — and my boots hang on a peg in my house.

Only one more game — my testimonial — to go, and then my football career is wrapped up in a scrapbook — and this brochure.



I would like to thank the directors of Bolton for allowing me the use of Burnden Park for the game and all the players for giving up their spare time to play for me.

I want to thank Jack Marshall for giving me my first chance in the game and Jimmy Armfield and Ian Greaves for trying to show me the right path to walk.

My thanks, too, to Sunday People sports-writer Norman Wynne who has spent so much of his spare time in producing this brochure; to Ron Greenwood, the England manager who found time between his international duties to write an article, and to all the advertisers.

I want to thank all my other friends who kindly penned words for me and to the Sports editors of the Bolton Evening News, Blackburn Telegraph and the Sunday People for supplying photographs of the good moments of my career.

And finally I want to thank all of you, the fans, who have made everything so worthwhile.

From the bottom of my heart — thank you all.

JOHN BYROM TESTIMONIAL COMMITTEE

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All the best to John

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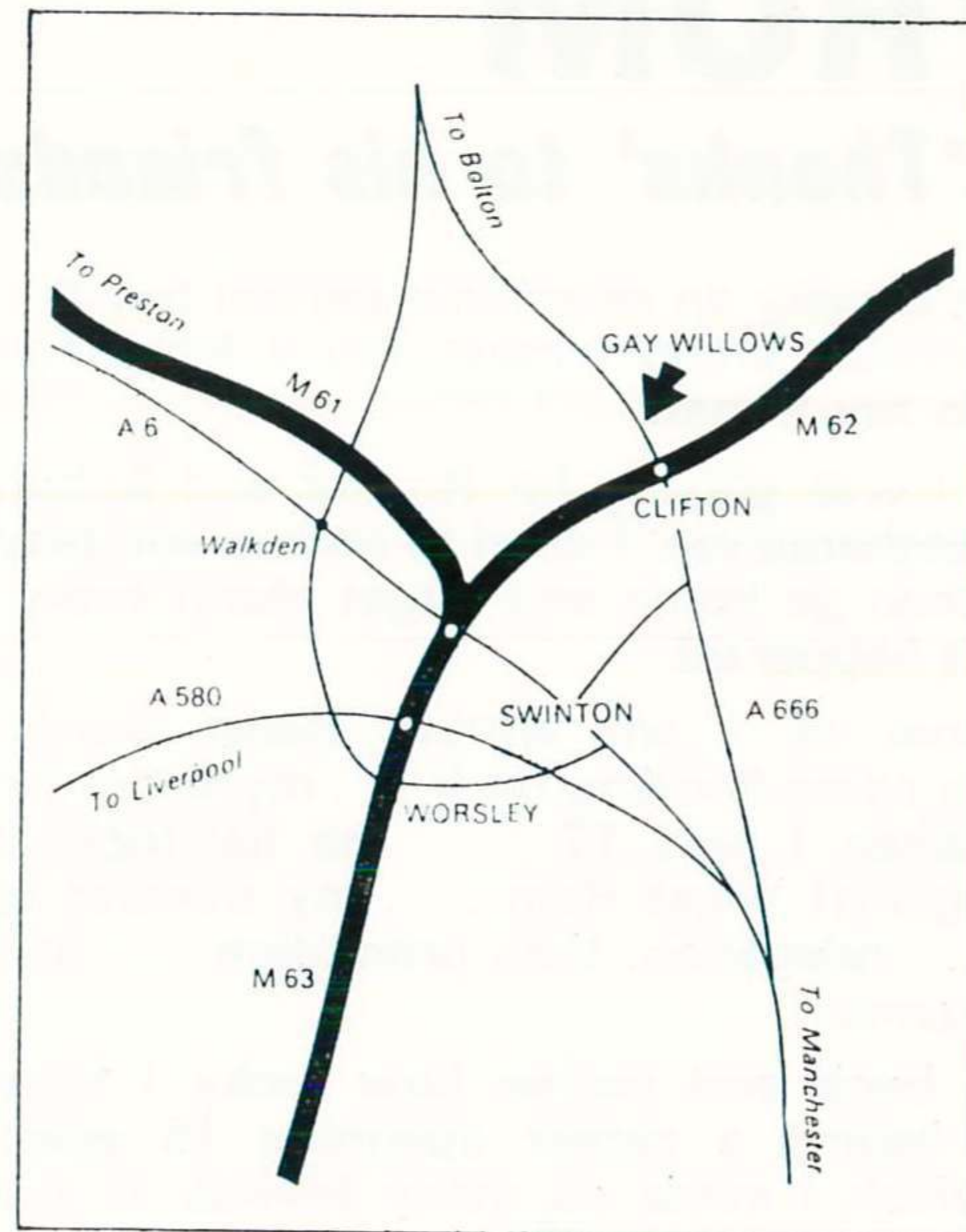
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GEORGE WARBURTON

(CHAIRMAN, BOLTON WANDERERS)

He admits quite openly that, as a player he lacked the discipline that should have kept him at the top.

But there is no question that he had the ability that should have taken him to the game's highest honours.

He was a part of the great rebuilding of Bolton after the trauma of relegation to the Third Division for the first time in the club's history.

He was a popular member of the team and with the fans. Now he has finished playing but he knows he will always be welcome at Burnden.

He deserves a bumper send-off in his testimonial game and I know the fans of Bolton and Blackburn will turn up to give him a super farewell.

I AM delighted to be able to write these few words about John Byrom. For the ten years of his career that he spent at Bolton he proved himself to be one of the game's greatest characters.

He came to Bolton with the reputation of being a goalscorer and he maintained that reputation throughout his time with us.

JIM RIGBY

(TESTIMONIAL COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN)

IT WAS June, 1966. Football was buzzing with World Cup speculation. In the North West we found ourselves talking soccer to fans from Brazil and Hungary.

Then, suddenly, came one item of soccer news that, as far as Bolton supporters were concerned, had far more importance than the World Cup.

Wanderers had signed John Byrom from neighbours Blackburn and the town was buzzing with the expectation of, at last, a goalscorer to take over from the legendary Nat Lofthouse.

That was when I first met J.B. and I have been enthralled by him ever since. He brought his own brand of magic and charisma to a side that had lacked glamour for too long.

J.B. was "one of us"; he was as Lancashire as hot-pot and he immediately set up a rapport with the fans.



They loved it when he scored; groaned with him when he missed and loved every minute of every performance.

Now he's no longer part of the Burnden playing scene; he's called a halt. But he ends his career knowing that he played an important part in the rebuilding of Wanderers and that the fans will remember him always with affection and gratitude.

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A Born Goalscorer

by IAN GREAVES

Manager of Bolton Wanderers F.C.

MANY footballers who have gone on to play for England have reason to place their success on the shoulders of a good coach and a good manager.

The game is littered with stories of how a manager has brought out the best in a player by switching him to another position, or giving him extra training sessions in order to strengthen an apparent weakness.

That will apply to all positions except one — that of goalscorer. For I firmly believe that goalscorers are born not made.

That is the position of John Byrom, a natural goalscorer — and there are not many of them about.

In the ten years John had been at Bolton I have no hesitation in saying that he was as important to the club as Jimmy Greaves was to Tottenham.

Sadly John decided to quit playing at the end of last season and decided, instead, to work outside the game.

Yet I know he is still a Bolton fan, one of our keenest supporters. After a decade with one club you can't suddenly switch off your allegiance.

Goalscorers like J.B., as he is widely known throughout the game, bring tremendous enjoyment to the fans because, at the end of the day, the game is all about scoring goals.

There is no bigger thrill in the game than scoring; everybody loves a goalscorer — just look at the delight on the faces of his teammates when somebody puts the ball in the back of the net.

And goalscorers jealously guard their reputations. I remember once when John and Stuart Lee went for a ball and it finished up in the net.



I credited the goal to Stuart — who had been having a thin time — and John was blazing angry. He insisted it was his toe which had got to the ball first.

But I had told the Press that Stuart had scored and I didn't want to change it.

The following week John scored a goal — it was obviously his! — and he immediately turned his back to me on the touchline and pointed to the number on his back as if to say "Don't get it wrong this time". He just loved scoring.

That was J.B., always getting a bit of fun out of the game, and now that he has quit, much of that fun has gone. For there was nobody quite like J.B.

When they made him they broke the mould. He was one of the great characters I have known in football always enjoying the game and himself.

There are not many of his kind of players around and he deserves a bumper testimonial for the enjoyment and pleasure he gave to so many.

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NEIL WHATMORE *RECALLS A GREAT J.B. GOAL*

IN THE five years I have been a professional footballer I have scored more than 50 goals in the League. And when I think back, the memories tumble over themselves.

I REMEMBER clearly my first game for Bolton against Swansea away, and I was only 17 and still an apprentice. It was April 4, 1972.

I REMEMBER playing against Everton in the semi-finals of the Football League Cup and scoring the equaliser at Goodison Park gave me one of my biggest thrills.

I REMEMBER, also, a chance I had in the second game at Burnden when I tried a lob which went over the goalkeeper and just over the bar.

If that had gone in, who knows, it might have been Bolton at Wembley, instead of Everton.

But my overriding memory in my short time in football has been none of my achievements. It was a goal J.B. scored against Southampton.

He was just inside the Southampton half when the ball was played up to him. The pitch was really a mud heap yet John dragged it through the mud past one player and another until the edge of the penalty area when he slammed it into the back of the net.

It was one of the great goals I have seen and it helped us to a 3-3 draw. We lost the replay 2-0, but nothing can erase the memory of John's fabulous goal.

Of course, J.B. was that kind of player. He never had a care in the world; nothing ever worried him.

When I first got into the Bolton first-team I used to worry tremendously about everything. And it was J.B. who always gave me advice — don't worry about football; just do what you can.

J.B., I know, would tell me not to worry because the goals will come again. I know they will, but often I wish I had his temperament.

When we played together he helped me a lot. I'm glad to help him in this, his testimonial brochure.

For I think everybody at Bolton will agree there's never been anybody quite like J.B. in football!

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DEREK DOUGAN

(Chairman of the Prof. Footballers Association)

remembers John's early days at Blackburn.

SOME PLAYERS earn tremendous respect and admiration in the game without becoming household names. One of them is John Byrom. Outside Blackburn and Bolton, his name is probably not too well known, but he has contributed a great deal to the game.

I first noticed him at Blackburn, when he came on the books as a 15-year-old ground-staff boy. I was a few years older and had joined Blackburn from Portsmouth.

In those days players were still expected to keep their mouths shut and get on with the game, without asking awkward questions. There was a long-standing tradition to support this attitude, but John would have nothing to do with it.

I soon became aware of his independence and self-assurance.

There are players who like to shout their mouths off but don't make much sense; and there are players who like to speak up for themselves and argue that it's only common-sense to do so.

That was John, even as a raw teenager new to the profession. He was precocious, but he impressed me, because he knew he was entering a tough, competitive profession and had to guard against anyone riding roughshod over him.

From the start, he let it be known that he didn't relish the menial tasks given to ground-staff boys. That, for him, was not part of the game.

Nor was he intimidated by the reputations of senior players. I well remember a practice match in which he was up against such stalwarts as Bryan Douglas, the star of the side, who played at outside-right for England; and the England captain Ronnie Clayton. Dougie didn't take kindly to a tackle from John and showed his displeasure with some harsh words.

Instead of cowering before the mighty, John gave him a mouthful and squared up to

Dougie. Here was a boy who knew how to take care of himself!

His misfortune at Blackburn was to be in a side whose manager did not realise the full potential. It could have been a great side, capable of winning major trophies.

There was a crop of talented young players coming up, such as Mike England, Keith Newton, Fred Pickering, Andy McEvoy and John Byrom, but the team was broken up.

Blackburn lost its sense of direction and never regained the finesse, composure and exciting talent that belonged to the side in those promising days.

John slogged it out, when he could have been in the company of better players.

Even so, over the years, he has continued to stick up for himself and I am proud, as chairman of the P.F.A., to endorse his testimonial brochure he so richly deserves.

He has been a tremendous servant of Blackburn and Bolton, a thorough professional on and off the pitch. He has put his heart and soul into the game . . . and the game owes him this tribute.

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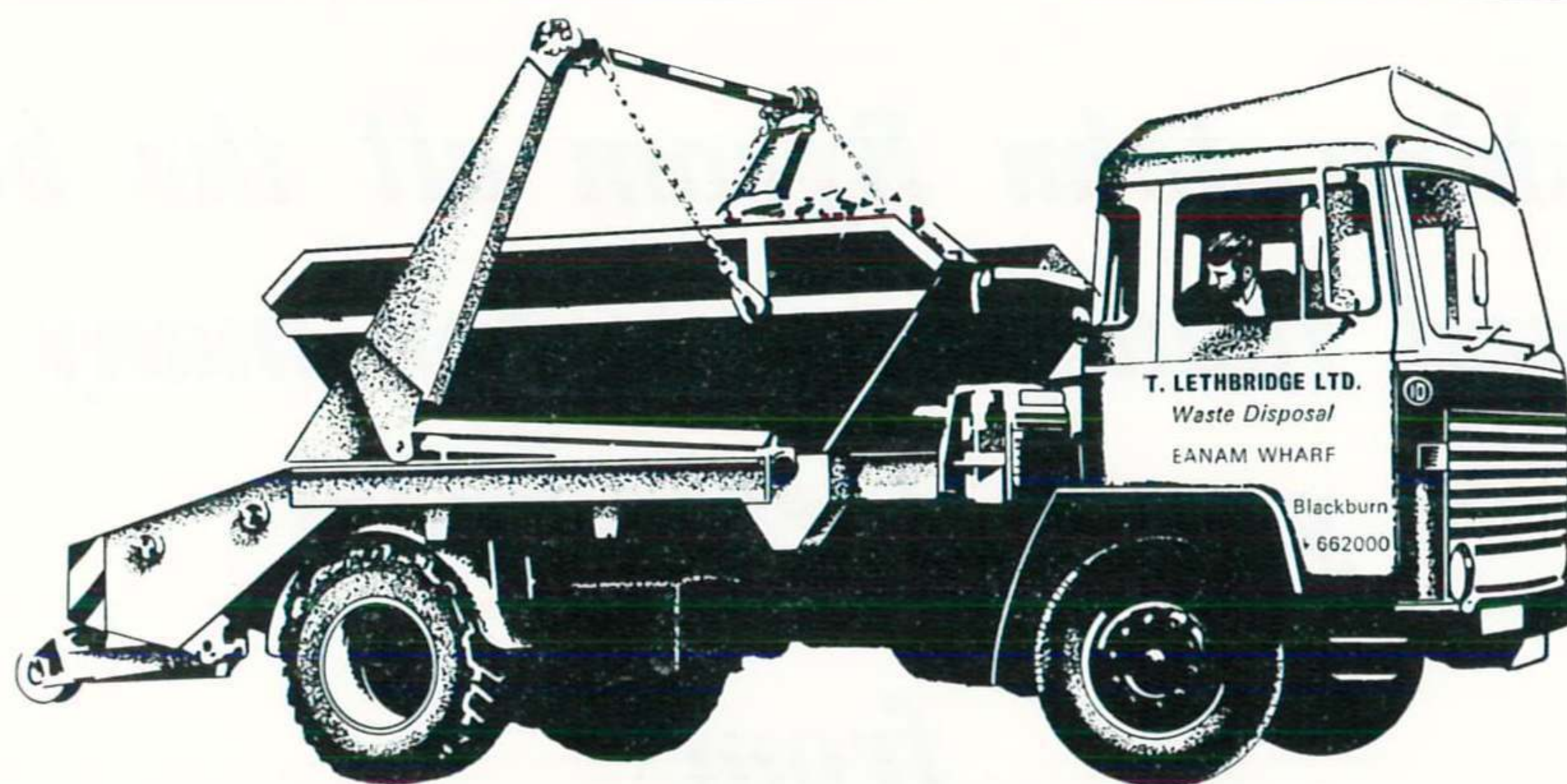
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RON GREENWOOD

(ENGLAND TEAM MANAGER)



talks of the class of a deadly finisher

WHEN I was in charge at West Ham there were many players up and down the country whose skill I admired very much.

One of those players was John Byrom. Whenever I saw him playing, for Blackburn in those days, I used to glow at his penetrating runs and deadly finishing.

Unfortunately for me and the Hammers, he used to somehow save his best performances for us. Looking back, it seems that every time Blackburn played West Ham, John would score a hat trick.

We all admired him but we grew to "hate" him a little. It seemed he wanted to take some

revenge on us and there was nothing we could do to stop him.

In a sense he had that happy knack of all great goalscorers like Jimmy Greaves . . . always a little unnoticed but always on the spot to put the ball in the back of the net.

Some people called it 'luck' but the professionals knew it was nothing of the sort. We knew his ability to score goals stemmed from a marvellous football brain.

Like all top goalscorers he had an instinctive ability anywhere around the penalty area and goalkeepers had to be constantly alert whenever John was in possession.

He was a grossly underrated player but his natural ability caused problems for some of the best defenders in the game.

It has been a pleasure for me to write these few words for John's testimonial. I'm sure the fans of Blackburn and Bolton will want to pay tribute to a player who gave them so much pleasure.

After all, goals are what the game of football is all about, and in that area of football John was among the best.

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ALEC JOHNSON

of the 'Daily Mirror'

MAYBE the record books will write off John Byrom in a few lines.

But in years to come Lancashire fans will remember him and recall his matches with far more affection than others who scored more and hit higher spots in the world of football.

To me John Byrom was what sport was all about. He loved playing and it showed badly.

I say badly, possibly because today so many managers, coaches and players seem desperately trying to make the game a bore.

To break into the sort of grin John flashed around the pitch is almost considered a sign of weakness.

For the fans it was magic. He was in the thick of things, he was impish, he was daring and when he had a crack at goal it was a full-blooded wallop.

As a youngster he stood out among the big established stars not just because of his skill and verve but because he was loving every minute of it.

I can't remember the number of times after a game I've seen long-faced players and officials skulk down a corridor like mourners when games have been lost and John has breezed irreverently through them.

It wasn't that John liked losing any more than anyone else; it was just that he had a glorious knack of hiding it.

John played soccer with passion and figured in a lot of dramatic moments. He fitted onto the stage of soccer but his sense of theatre allowed for a lot of comedy.

If he ever worries about his career . . . if he ever looks back and thinks he might have been a better player I'm telling him now to forget it.

For when, along with the thousands of others, I'm watching a game at Burnden Park or Ewood in the years to come and the game flags, I'll think of John.

I'll think of his flying figure, his slightly wild gestures and most of all I'll think of his grin.

Not only was John Byrom a damned exciting player, he was a great guy.

I know that's how all the Bolton and Blackburn fans feel. And it's worth all the record books in the business.



Jump for joy . . . Byrom beats the 'keeper as an anguished Don Howe looks on.

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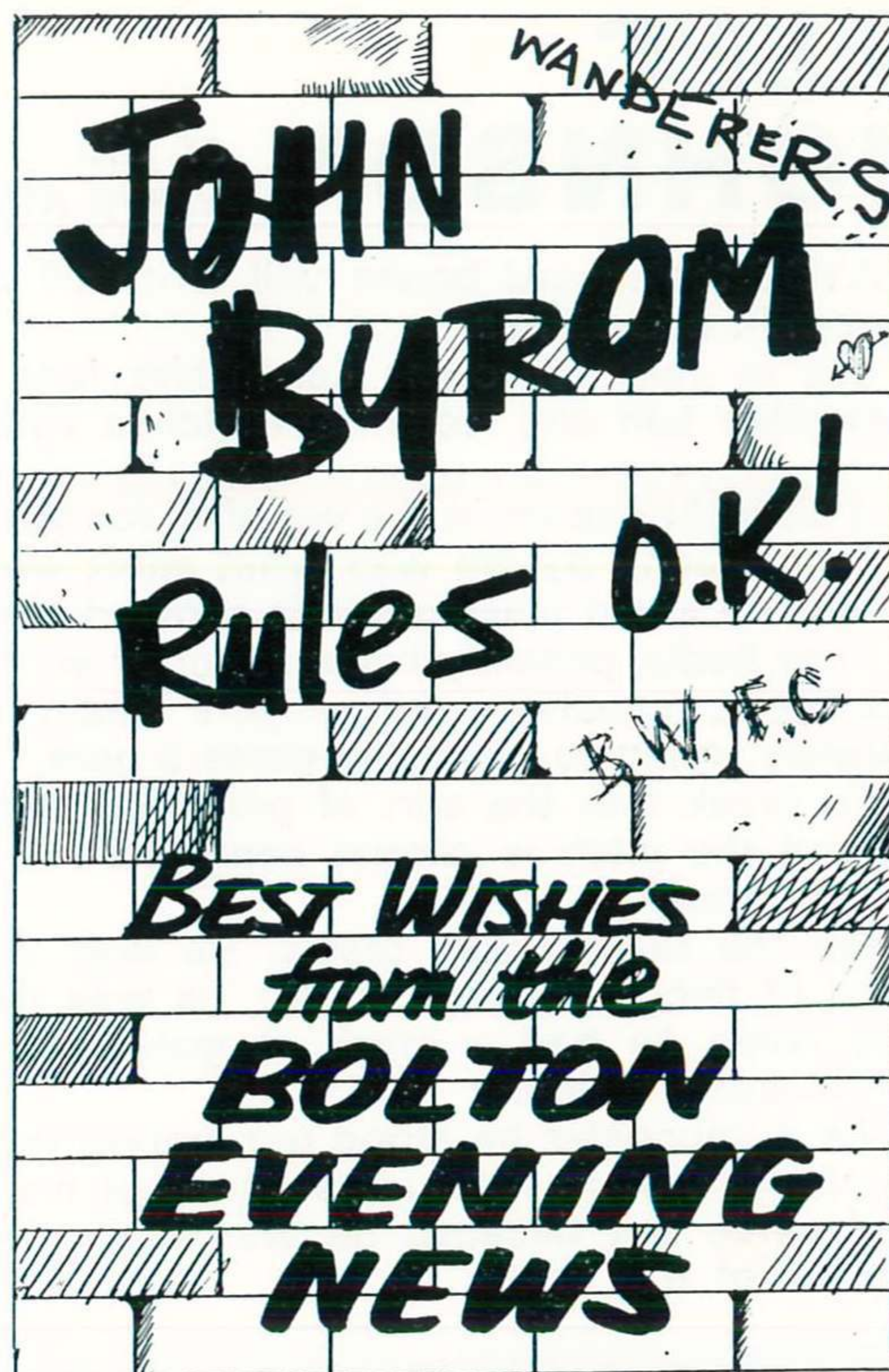
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JACK MARSHALL



The man who introduced Byrom to League Football

AMONG the many parts that go to make up a manager, two of the most important are judgment and an ability to make decisions.

I faced such situations many times in my managerial career, of course, and one of the most important occasions was in 1961.

As manager of Blackburn I had to try and lift Rovers out of the doldrums. The Cup final defeat by Wolves still rankled in the town; the team was struggling and some of the big names had lost their edge.

After a lot of deliberation and heart-searching I decided to leave out such great names as Derek Dougan, Peter Dobing and Chris Crowe. In their places I introduced three youngsters — Fred Pickering (19), Brian Taylor (18) and John Byrom, a leggy 17-year-old.

John Byrom would have been an England player had his attitude been right. He wasn't consistent and, sadly, he didn't fulfill all the enormous potential he showed as a teenager goalscorer.

You set your own standards in football and John's standard was very high.

He should never have left Rovers; he could have been as big a favourite as Bryan Douglas. But things didn't work out for him and when Bolton wanted him I felt a change of club was what he needed.

John was the kind of character football badly needs. He also had the talent that football needs. My regret — and I'm sure his, too — is that he never reached the standards he might have done.

BILL RIDDING

The man who introduced Byrom to Bolton Wanderers

IT WAS 1966; Bolton, in the First Division, had some very good players who were, in a footballing sense, getting on a bit.

As manager, I felt we needed someone young and energetic who could bring a fresh approach to our game.

There was a youngster at Blackburn who, I felt, could fill the bill. He interested me because he had what I was looking for — pace, vision, skill and an ability to score goals.

So I asked Bryan Douglas about him and Bryan, England winger and one of the great players of the day, gave him a great recommendation which convinced me I should sign him.

That's how John Byrom came to Burnden Park and while I was in charge he never gave me a moment's doubt about the wisdom of signing him.



Duggy told me that John would do a good job for me, and he did. He proved to me that whatever we paid for him was well worth it.

I had no redress with him at all for he linked up well with the rest of the forwards and they made up a very good strike force.

Those were the days B.R. — before Ramsey — when football was still played with two full-backs, three half-backs and five forwards. And as an inside-forward John found space and made space for others that was what I wanted.

He didn't spare himself in the cause of Bolton and he satisfied me — and more important, the directors — that he was one of my best signings.

I severed my connections with football almost ten years ago but, I remember well the joy and pleasure John Byrom gave me.

He deserves a bumper testimonial because, I know he gave a great deal of pleasure to so many people.

It's J.B. . . . by the LEFT . . .



JOHN BYROM'S career has been littered with hat-tricks. Three against West Ham . . . ten in his career. And he was robbed of another when his manager awarded a goal scored by him to another player.

But the hat-trick most fans happily recall at once is the one he scored against Stoke in an F.A. Cup-tie that earned its own place in football history because it was played on a Sunday.

Something like 40,000 people turned up to see Byrom display his total all-round talents.

He gave the Stoke defence the first taste of his marvellous knack of scoring goals with a LEFT-foot drive (above) that had Stoke

defenders Alan Bloor (left) and Mickey Pejic looking on in awe.

That wasn't enough for John. Opposite, top, he showed his two-footed skills with a shot from his RIGHT foot that was too fast for Pejic's outstretched boot . . and Peter Shilton's dive.

Then he showed he was just as good with his head and the picture (right) shows all the grace and power that brought a look of admiration from Peter Reid.

It was enough, and the smile on his face and his right arm raised in salute (far right) shows what J.B. thought about it all.

And some 40,000 Boltonians would agree!

JOHNNY B . . . JOHNNY B . . . JOHNNY B . . . JOHNNY B . . . JOHNNY B

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ALF THORNTON

(Blackburn Evening Telegraph)

WHEN John Byrom was growing up in his native Blackburn, the crowds watching Rovers at Ewood Park were big and enthusiastic enough for their cheers to be heard at the family home in John Bright Street at Waterfall.

John grew up in a soccer atmosphere. He watched Rovers as a schoolboy and it was always his ambition to play for the famous old club and wear the blue-and-white shirt.

His ambition came true — in a boys' story book manner, for he was playing First Division football a little over two years after leaving St. Peter's C.E. Secondary Modern.

He was 15 when he was taken on the Rovers' staff, signed professional at 17, and on November 11, 1961 stepped out in a number 10 shirt for his debut against Birmingham City at St. Andrew's and Rovers' 2-0 success gave him extra cause to celebrate.

He kept his place for 10 games on the trot. His first goals, two in the same match, in fact, came against Manchester City at Ewood Park on December 9 and on Boxing Day he hit the national headlines with a hat-trick at West Ham in a 3-2 win.

I was with him after the match when the first thing he did was ring a friend at Blackburn to get the news to his father.

In his early days at Blackburn there was keen competition for first-team places and John hardly had a look in at the time when Rovers' regular front line was Mike Ferguson, Andy McEvoy, Fred Pickering, Bryan Douglas and Mike Harrison.

His real chance came when Pickering was sold to Everton in March 1964. The following season Byrom and McEvoy struck up their goal-scoring duo which had the crowds flocking to see the Rovers.

In 40 League appearances Byrom scored 25 goals and Dubliner McEvoy 29. But when he was being freely tipped for further international honours — he had won youth international honours early in his career — Byrom lost the goals flair.

It was a complete mystery to all at Ewood that in 1965-66 Byrom could manage only three goals in 26 appearances, but this was overshadowed by the fact that Rovers lost their First Division place.

It was no consolation at all that they reached the sixth-round of the F.A. Cup — but in the fourth round Byrom hit another hat-trick against West Ham, the team he loved to hate.

When the following season started, Byrom was in Bolton's colours. He was transferred in June, 1966 for £25,000, surely the best bargain Bill Ridding struck in his many years as Bolton's boss.

Byrom has an impish sense of humour and I know how much he relished the goals he scored against Rovers when he was a Bolton player.

In fact, he scored against them in the Anglo-Scottish Cup less than a month before he re-joined the Rovers in September, 1976, after being freed by Wanderers in appreciation of his 10 years' service at Burnden.

Byrom was very happy, indeed, that it should all finish for him where it started.

In his one and only season back at Ewood, Byrom was persistently troubled by a nagging groin strain and he managed to make only 15 League appearances. But there were flashes of real skill — as, for instance, in the 2-1 win at Wolverhampton when he got both goals, and again against Burnley at Ewood Park when he scored twice in a 2-2 draw.

Ian Smith

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'Cheeky'

by **BILL FRYER**

of the 'Daily Express'

HE WAS a character even then, was John Byrom, and it was December 1961 and he was only 17.

I had gone along to Ewood Park, Blackburn, to see this young forward who had already mastered the best trick in the football book, the art of putting the ball into the net.

True, the hardest job of all for us Press chaps is interviewing the very young, footballers or any other types. They haven't lived very long, so they haven't a lot to tell you.

But this was ridiculous!

Young John seemed to have a vocabulary of only two words: "**Aw reet.**"

What did it feel like to be scoring goals at his tender age for a famous founder member of the Football League, Blackburn Rovers?

"**Aw reet,**" he said.

How had Rovers helped him along

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"Aw reet," he said.

What did he think of the wonderful football life that lay before him, with its possibilities of travel and all?

"Aw reet."

Nevertheless, I had noticed that inflection made "Aw reet" mean many things, as "Mmmmm" can. Try it out for yourself.

But I had misjudged him. He had at least THREE words in his vocabulary, as I discovered when I asked him what his scholastic prowess had been like, things like sums and things.

"Terrible," he said, and in a spate of loquacity that completely burst the non-vocabulary bubble he added:

"But I was good at blowin' t' ball up."

It was then that I suspected he was taking the Mickey. For 17 years since then it has been confirmed to me countless times. And thank heavens for little smiles.

One thing lacking more than any other in football today is a smile. The last of the men with a chuckle on their faces to match the chuckle in their boots, Denis Law and John Byrom are, sadly, retired from the game.

John has more than once admitted to me that his game lacked discipline, and at those times he regretted it. He meant he found it hard to conform to fixed instructions and ideas.

But had he been the sort of player who followed instructions to the letter he could not have been John Byrom and he would not have been in exactly the right place to score his goals, and so many of them.

It is the players who do the unexpected who usually win matches.

When he was a groundstaff boy, he told me in that old, old interview, he was a reluctant painter, cleaner up of stands, tidier up of dressing rooms, cleaner of baths and fulfiller of the other menial tasks groundstaff boys are wont to be saddled with.

He thought football grounds were for playing football in. And by the time I had finished chatting to young John I don't know who was laughing the louder, Jack Marshall, Rovers' manager, or I. I never saw a better straight-face comic than John.

He may well have been kidding when he told me he was terrible at sums, because he certainly wasn't terrible at angles. Nor was he short of the brain cells that provide the vision

continued on next page

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JOHN BYROM
on his
football retirement



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HEADS I WIN . . .



. . . and J.B.'s header is too good for Blackpool's Dave Hatton.

BILL FRYER continued

without which the best players would not be the best players.

I should add that only the brave survive constant forays into the opposition penalty area. Such a boy, such a man was John.

I have watched John Byrom many, many times since that day in 1961, for Blackburn and in his ten years with Bolton Wanderers, and I thank him for the pleasure he has given me. He was a player of great gifts, not least of which was his sense of humour even when things had gone against him.

As they say in these parts: "He'll do for me, will yon".

—::—

Best wishes to Johnny Byrom from

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MIKE ELLIS *of 'The Sun'*

ANYONE who has spent only a few moments in the company of John Byrom would soon realise he belongs to that select group of footballers known as "characters".

Never one to be short of a word or two on just about everything under the sun, J.B. will be remembered with some affection and a lot of amusement by the soccer press.

I say he was never stuck for a word but on one occasion I managed to render him speechless. Every year the Football Writers' Association stage a big dinner in London to present their Footballer of the Year award and that's how I first really got to know J.B. by inviting him down as one of my guests.

A trip to the "smoke" always had a certain appeal to John — I wonder why? — so he was only too happy to attend the annual get-together which sees around 600 footballers past and present enjoying themselves with members of my profession.

On the train I casually mentioned to John that Liverpool's Tommy Smith would probably be on our table . . . and J.B. was struck dumb for one of the rare moments in his life, not just dumb — the colour drained from his face and when he managed to pull himself together the reason why was revealed.

A couple of years earlier John had got himself involved with the Anfield iron-man during a Cup tie at Liverpool, and the prospect of meeting Smithy again didn't exactly fill J.B. with gleeful anticipation.

I've known Tommy Smith for years and despite the 'tough-guy' image on the field like so many hard men he can be as polite and sociable as anyone away from football. So I knew John had nothing to worry about — but why should I tell him that and spoil the fun?

Instead, when we arrived at the hotel, I watched with interest to see how John would handle the situation.

Despite all the people crowding around John managed to spot Tommy in the distance and made a bee-line for him to give Smith one of the warmest welcomes of his life.

You've got to hand it to John — he can do these things in style. Tommy must have been totally surprised, but being the person he is, he greeted J.B. like a long lost friend and the relief at avoiding an awkward moment must have been the reason why John had a few drinks that night!

I'll remember him as a player, too. When Sunday football came to Bolton for the first time John seemed determined to make the most of it with an F.A. Cup hat-trick against Stoke.

Afterwards he handled the Press with typical ease but after a few minutes he called a halt and pointed to Jimmy Armfield down the corridor.

"You lads better go and have a word with the gaffer — he's dying to talk to someone after this result" said John. Typical Byrom that!

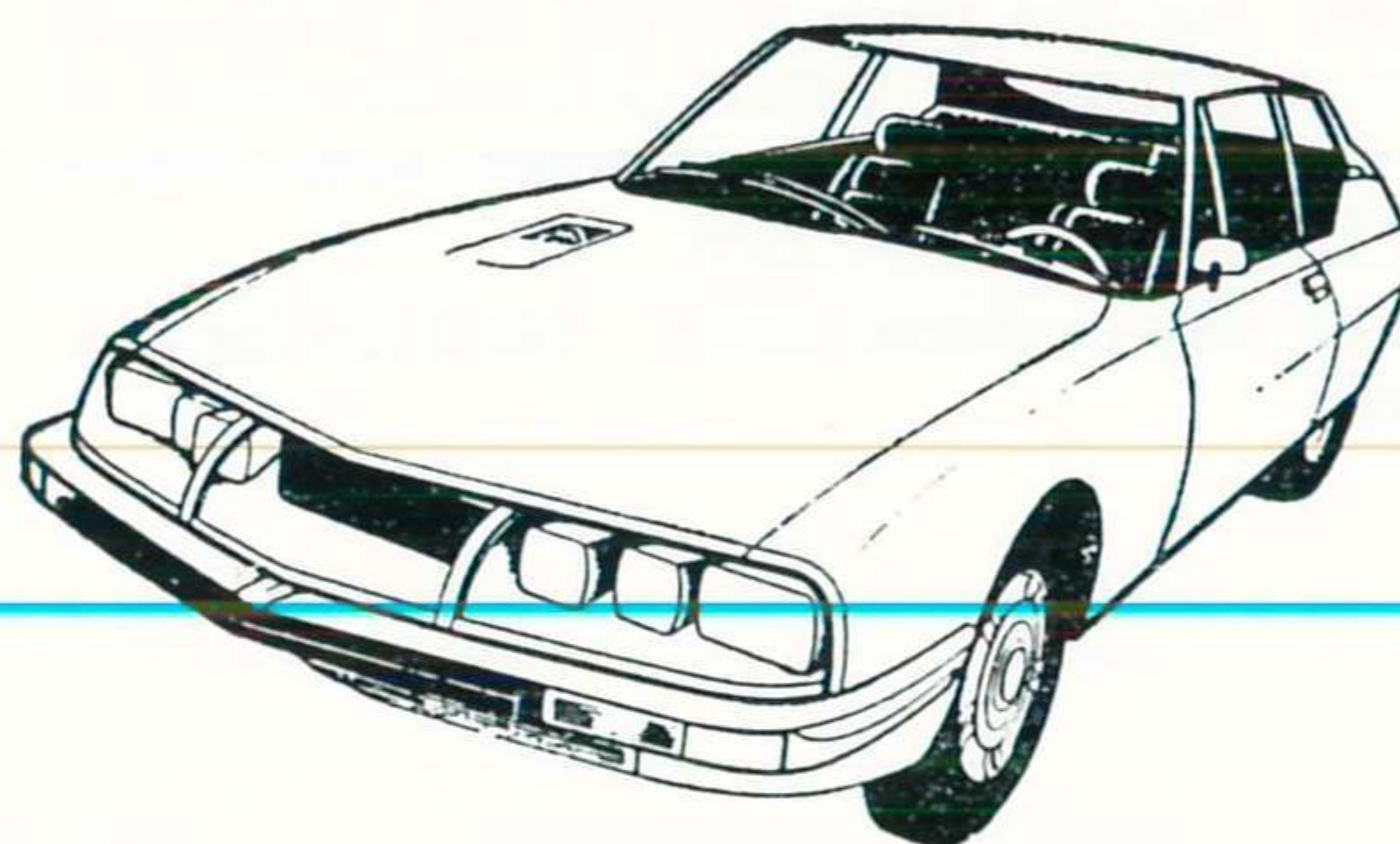
Now a long career has ended but I'll bet he's still got a few more laughs up his sleeve and I haven't even touched on the day he was thrown out of Ewood Park by Ken Furphy. We shall put that one in cold storage — nice to know you, John!

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Jack Banks, late Chairman of the Wanderers, with Stuart Lee and John Byrom holding their "Player of the Month" trophies.

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FRANK BOOTH

BOLTON EVENING NEWS

JOHN BYROM'S career in soccer ended when he left Burnden Park on a free transfer to join Blackburn . . . the club where it all started.

It was a case of the local boy making good with his home town team and Byrom was pushed into the cauldron of First Division soccer at a very tender age with the Ewood Park club.

He rapidly became a "boy wonder" and when Bolton were seeking an attacker prior to the 1966-7 season, manager Bill Ridding turned to his neighbours to snap up Byrom for around £25,000.

That was a reasonable fee in those days and Byrom came into the Bolton side to play alongside Francis Lee, Wyn Davies, Freddie Hill and Gordon Taylor.

But the season was not very old when Davies was transferred to Newcastle for an £80,000 fee and Byrom was moved into more of a striking than a deep lying role.

In his first season at Burnden he played in 24 League games scoring six goals and the following season he scored nine goals in 23.

Wanderers were going through an unhappy period with manager Ridding leaving the club to be replaced by former playing idol Nat Lofthouse.

But Byrom continued to pop in the goals and in the 1968-9 season he hit six in 21 appearances in the League.

The club was experiencing a transitional period and while the players around him were changing, the fair-haired attacker was showing his undoubted class in front of goal with 20 goals from 40 League outings in 1969-70.

To average a goal in every two games is no mean feat and possibly because the goals dried up for him in the 1970-1 season, Wanderers were relegated into the Third Division for the first time in the history of the club.

But the rise began the following season when Wanderers started to inject youngsters into the side to play alongside the experienced Byrom and in the 1972-3 season, promotion was achieved as champions with his 20 goals playing no small part in the feat.

Class tells in any division and on the Wanderers' return to the Second Division, Byrom was there again banging in 18 goals followed by 10 the season after.

In the 1975-6 season, Byrom played 29 League games and scored 10, but that was the

(continued on page 33)

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JIMMY ARMFIELD

TO SAY simply that John Byrom was a very good finisher would really be an understatement.

His goals record speaks for itself and the number of goals he scored for Bolton while I was manager did so much for the success we achieved.

I remember, particularly, the goal he scored against Port Vale when we were going for promotion from the Third Division.

Late in the game we were losing 2-1 and things were getting desperate. Although we were top of the League, we knew we couldn't afford to drop any points because there were too many other teams chasing us.

Then, right near the end J.B. came along with a truly memorable goal to give us the point which kept us on top.

We got promotion — in fact, the championship — that year and John got some great goals for us. But that one really stands out not only for its importance but also for its execution.

Then there was the game against Stoke,



played on a Sunday afternoon because of the electricians strike.

It was a unique occasion and a tremendous crowd turned up. And that kind of situation acted like an extra dose of adrenalin for J.B.

He scored a hat-trick that afternoon which still ranks as one of the greatest performances I have ever seen. He was nothing short of brilliant.

John's experience won a lot of games for us that promotion year. And all I can say to him is "thanks for the memories, John."



Champions — Bolton . . . line-up of 1972-3 promotion side.

(Frank Booth continued)

end of the road and after deciding to quit soccer completely the player was, in the end, allowed to leave the club on a free transfer to move back to Rovers.

Bolton had lost a "character" both on and off the field and soccer is all the poorer for the lack of such people.

I believe there is no question that if Byrom had been able to channel his ability properly, he would now have many caps to his credit.

I shall never forget his performances in the F.A. Cup in the 1973-4 season. He hit a hat-

trick against Stoke in the third round at Burnden. Then, in the fourth round with the Wanderers trailing at Southampton he scored two wonder goals to give his side a 3-3 draw — the first being his 100th for the club.

Always a joker, he couldn't resist standing at the foot of the Burnden Press Box steps when, as substitute in a game against continental opposition, and shouting: "Bring on Byrom, we want Byrom."

The Press loved it. But when Byrom went onto the field and grabbed a hat-trick, the feeling was that perhaps he wasn't joking!

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The perfect ending — A delighted Byrom receives the congratulations of colleague Stuart Lee.

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